

5 March 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: DDI

SUBJECT : NSC Action on Iraq

You will recall that when Gordon Gray raised the subject of Iraq some time ago and got it to the NSC, Planning Board was directed to keep Iraq policy under continuing review. First State argued that we should wait till Jernigan had sent in his initial reports. Then State argued that the present paragraphs in 5820 cover the contingencies so that there was no need for a policy review. At that time we were unable to state unequivocally that the trend in Iraq was toward Communism rather than independent nationalism.

It seems to me that the evidence of the past month permits us to be a great deal more conclusive on the above question. Our recent SNIE (36.2-59 of 17 February 1959) concludes that we doubt Kassim's ability to stem the movement toward a Communist takeover of his regime, and we believe that his area for maneuver is shrinking rapidly." We now have the report of removal of two division commanders and most recently the appointment of Mahdawi as Minister of Interior, which OCI says would be the strongest indication to date that Kassim is increasingly subject to Communist influence.

I realize that we and State may already have things afoot re Iraq about which I know nothing. If this is not the case, shouldn't we raise Iraq again at the Planning Board, perhaps in the form of getting the Director to make a summary of the present trend in his next NSC briefing, thus permitting you to raise the subject at the Planning Board pre-briefing and to ask for further Planning Board consideration of the policy issue. I am fearful that with our eyes glued on Berlin we may let this slide beyond the point of no return.

Incidentally James O'Donnell's glossy article on Kuwait in current Saturday Evening Post ends up with a ringing advocacy of the accommodation with Nasser case which we argued at Planning Board.

R. W. KOMER

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